Housing Nova Scotia

Annual Accountability Report

Fiscal Year 2014-2015

Housing
NOVA SCOTIA
Opening Possibilities.

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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of Housing Nova Scotia for the year ended March 31, 2015 is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Housing Nova Scotia Business Plan for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of Housing Nova Scotia outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by Housing Nova Scotia management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Housing Nova Scotia management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Housing Nova Scotia 2014-15 Business Plan.

Joanne Bernard
Minister responsible for Housing Nova Scotia

Dan Troke
President and Chief Executive Officer, Housing Nova Scotia

Message from the Minister & CEO of Housing Nova Scotia

It is with great pleasure that we present you with the 2014-2015 Accountability Report for Housing Nova Scotia.

This annual report details the corporation's major accomplishments for the past year and demonstrates our overall performance, as we continue to deliver on government's priorities. Housing Nova Scotia's activities during the 2014-15 fiscal year focused on creating more affordable housing options for low and modest income Nova Scotians. In addition, we continued to deliver on achieving better housing outcomes for thousands of Nova Scotians.

Some of our major achievements over the past fiscal year include:

- Creating a 10-year capital improvement plan for aging public housing
- Identifying necessary funding to deliver more rent supplements through Deferred Federal Contributions funds
- Development and delivery of a Neighbourhood Improvement Initiative through strategic partnerships
- Providing financial assistance for health and safety-related home repairs to help more than 1,000 seniors and persons with disabilities stay in their homes and communities

Housing Nova Scotia's strong partnership with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) is key to delivery of many of its programs. In 2014, both government agencies agreed to a five-year extension to the CMHC/Nova Scotia Agreement for Investment in Affordable Housing, which secured an additional investment of $102 million.

As life's circumstances continue to force many individuals into homelessness, Housing Nova Scotia stands ready to help. Last year, we worked with other members of the Halifax Housing and Homelessness Partnership to develop a plan to end homelessness in HRM. In addition, we continued to help more individuals find a permanent home through the housing support worker program.

The overall success of our organization comes from our staff, partners and stakeholders. Meeting the housing needs of Nova Scotians requires a collective effort and we are fortunate that so many dedicated and passionate people are working with us to help achieve this goal.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Joanne Bernard
Minister responsible for Housing Nova Scotia

Dan Troke
President and Chief Executive Officer, Housing Nova Scotia

Financial Results

	Estimate 2014-15 ($000)	Actual 2014-15 ($000)
Funding Source		
Revenue from government sources	105,759	104,865
Revenue from rents	54,046	56,915
Interest, revenue from land sales, and other revenue	34,445	35,468
Total funding	194,250	197,248
Expenditure source		
Interest on long-term debt	43,592	42,298
Property management and operation	57,169	63,254
Maintenance and capital improvements	34,771	37,505
Housing renovation and affordable housing	21,530	18,060
Social housing subsidies	15,388	13,904
Depreciation of investment in social housing	18,800	20,890
Provision for Doubtful Accounts and cost of land sold	0	755
Housing Strategy	3,000	582
Total expenditures	194,250	197,248

Structure and Organizational Context

Housing Nova Scotia was created in August 2013 in follow-up to the May 2013 release of the provincial housing strategy, *Building Community and Affordability for Nova Scotia Families: A Housing Strategy for Nova Scotia*[1]. The organization was formerly known as the Nova Scotia Housing Development Corporation.

In 2014-15, Housing Nova Scotia's reporting relationship within the Department of Community Services was affirmed. The figure below shows Housing Nova Scotia's current governance structure and ongoing relationship within the Department of Community Services. In May 2014, the Minister announced an Interim Advisory Committee for Housing Nova Scotia. Eight committee members were appointed, representing public housing tenants, private developers, non-profit providers, and the academic and research sector. At the initial committee meeting, the Minister shared that her vision for Housing Nova Scotia includes drawing on community expertise and experience to guide it forward.

Overview of Housing Nova Scotia's Governance Structure

Ministerial Advisory Committee
Minister
Deputy Minister, Community Services
Chief Executive Officer, Housing Nova Scotia
Chief Financial Officer, Housing Nova Scotia
Executive Director, Housing Nova Scotia
Five Regional Housing Authorities
Director, Housing Services Head Office & Regional Offices
Director, Property & Facilities & Building Design

Housing Nova Scotia's external environment presents drivers and challenges that contribute to and influence our strategic direction and progress toward intended outcomes. Much of the work we do in support of the creation of new affordable housing is long term in its nature. Often, we rely on partnerships with developers, private sector service providers, non-for-profit organizations, community representatives and other key stakeholders. Our work also depends on factors including funding availability and market conditions. As a result, many of our affordable housing initiatives span multiple years.

[1] http://housing.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/Housing_Strategy.pdf

2014-15 Milestones

Housing Nova Scotia's progress and achievements during 2014-15 demonstrate alignment with government priorities in areas that include fiscal sustainability, demographics and the enhancement of communities and social well-being.

1. **CMHC/Nova Scotia Agreement for Investment in Affordable Housing 2014-2019** – In August 2014, the Province of Nova Scotia and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) entered into a five-year affordable housing agreement extension that involves a total of $102 million. Under the agreement, housing funds will be cost-shared between the federal government and provincial government and its partners.

   Over the life of the initial three-year agreement, a total of 7,406 households were assisted. With the five-year extension of funding, we anticipate helping over 10,000 more low-income households in need to access affordable housing that is sound, safe, suitable and sustainable.

2. **Committed Deferred Federal Contribution funds[2] to preserve and expand our social housing stock** – Housing Nova Scotia developed a plan to strategically invest $42 million from deferred federal contribution funds over a ten-year period:
   - $4 million committed in 2014-15 for repairs and upgrades to public housing units in Springhill, New Glasgow, Dartmouth and Bridgewater. This includes upgrades to roofing, heating systems, windows, sprinkler and fire alarm systems, and accessibility improvements;
   - $5 million committed in 2014-15 to repair, upgrade and revitalize senior public housing in Halifax, Dartmouth, Sydney, Amherst and Enfield. Examples of repairs and upgrades include pedestrian access ways, driveways and parking, sprinkler systems, plumbing, cladding and doors.
   - $8 million to be spent on housing cooperatives over the next two years on necessary structural repairs such as electrical, plumbing and heating upgrades and making accessibility improvements. These funds will be delivered through the Social Housing Assistance Repair Program.
   - $9.4 million allocated, with private sector support, toward the objective of creating 300 rent supplement units for a 10-year period, in areas of the province with the greatest need for affordable housing. Tenants for these rental units will come from households on public housing wait lists.
   - $15.6 million allocated for capital projects. Types of projects include roofing, elevator retrofits, air handling/ventilation upgrades, fire alarm and fire safety upgrades.

3. **Passive Housing** – In 2014-15, Housing Nova Scotia committed to building a demonstration duplex passive house on property owned by the Corporation in the Alice Street designated Neighbourhood Improvement Area in the Town of Truro. The term

[2] The term "Deferred Federal Contribution" refers to the funding available through the Canada-Nova Scotia Social Housing Agreement. These funds can only be used to assist targeted households within the social housing portfolio.

'passive house' refers to the world's leading energy standard. The focus of the standard is conserving energy by reducing heat loss through the building envelope and maximizing solar heat gains. We anticipate that the annual heating and utility costs could be as low as $350 to $400 per unit, which represents a savings of approximately 80 to 85% over a similar conventional build. Once completed, by the end of the 2015-16 fiscal year, the duplex will be managed by the Cobequid Housing Authority.

4. **Demonstration project involving smaller dwelling units** – Housing Nova Scotia has partnered with the Nova Scotia Home Builders Association to build eight row units on a parcel of land owned by the Corporation in Cole Harbour. The purpose of the project is to demonstrate that home ownership can be made more affordable by building smaller, more energy efficient, quality constructed homes. A private developer will build the homes which are expected to be complete in 2015-16.

2014-15 Priorities

The table below provides an overview of the priorities identified in our 2014-2015 Business Plan and the actions taken with respect to these priorities.

Overview of Housing Nova Scotia's 2014-15 Priorities	
Strategic Goal: Increase affordable housing options through innovative approaches	
Priority	**Accomplishment**
Obtain a Development Agreement from HRM to allow the construction of phase 1 of the Bloomfield redevelopment project	• In 2014-15, the conceptual design work for the proposed development was completed. This work was supported by a community engagement process. In June 2014, a Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) was issued related to the governance and operation of the community and cultural space included in the proposed development. This REOI process further informed the conceptual design for the development. • Housing Nova Scotia has presented a pre-application for a Development Agreement to the Halifax Regional Municipality and anticipates filing a formal application in the fall of 2015.
Facilitate or partner with non-profit and private developers to deliver demonstration projects that highlight well-designed, mixed-income and mixed-use developments in smaller towns	• Housing Nova Scotia is working to develop a portion of a 28-acre parcel of land it owns in the Town of Windsor, the College Park subdivision. A formal application for "Preliminary Subdivision Approval" was submitted in June 2014 and approved in August 2014. The approved plan allows for a variety of housing types – single detached, semi-detached and multi-unit homes. It also includes land dedicated for parkland, which would include walkways that allow for easy access throughout the subdivision. The next step is to work with the local community to finalize the subdivision plan and prepare plans for servicing the lots. • Under our New Rental Program, Housing Nova Scotia is always pursuing well-designed developments that include mixed-income tenants. In 2014-15, Housing Nova Scotia worked with developers to create 59 affordable units across the province through this program.

Overview of Housing Nova Scotia's 2014-15 Priorities	
Develop a new Neighbourhood Revitalization Initiative	• In the Alice Street, Truro designated Neighbourhood Improvement Area: o Housing Nova Scotia began delivering the Neighbourhood Spruce-Up program in August 2014. At the request of residents, this program was re-offered in spring 2015. o Fourteen affordable units were completed and rented in the spring of 2014. An additional 4 units were under construction in 2014-15 and are nearing completion. o Housing Nova Scotia also committed to building a demonstration duplex passive house on property owned in the Alice Street designated Neighbourhood Improvement Area. See additional detail in the Milestones section of this report.
Optimize government land resources	• Housing Nova Scotia continues to explore opportunities for new affordable housing using government land resources.
Identify housing development and home ownership opportunities by working with non-profit organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity, who support home ownership for low and modest income Nova Scotians	• In 2014-15, Housing Nova Scotia donated two parcels of land in East Preston to Habitat for Humanity to provide affordable home ownership opportunities for families in the community. • Housing Nova Scotia also contributed funding in 2014-15 to Habitat for Humanity to build new homes in Spryfield and Springhill. • Housing Nova Scotia is partnering with the Nova Scotia Home Builders Association to build 8 smaller, row units for home ownership in the Cole Harbour area. See additional detail in the Milestones section of this report.

Overview of Housing Nova Scotia's 2014-15 Priorities	
Strategic Goal: Create home ownership opportunities for low to modest income Nova Scotians	
Priority	**Accomplishment**
Providing an equity pathway to home ownership Introducing innovative financial assistance products aimed at supporting low and modest income Nova Scotians buying their own homes Offering home ownership classes for modest income households interested in buying their first home	• In 2014-15, Housing Nova Scotia undertook supporting research and analysis and initiated development of proposed affordable home ownership program options. This work is continuing in 2015-16. The proposed program options are being designed for application to Housing Nova Scotia developments including Bloomfield and College Park in Windsor. The purpose of these program options will be to help moderate income households build equity and gain a more stable financial footing. • Housing Nova Scotia intends to partner with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Habitat for Humanity in offering an ownership education program to clients who qualify for the proposed home ownership program. Participation in the education program will be a requirement for eligibility in the home ownership assistance program. Both CMHC and Habitat for Humanity have well-established home ownership education programs already in place.
Developing a strategic plan to better support the long-term sustainability of housing co-operatives in our portfolio	• In 2015-2016, Housing Nova Scotia will be developing a draft discussion paper to consult with co-operative housing organizations to obtain their input on the issues and challenges related to their long term sustainability.

Overview of Housing Nova Scotia's 2014-15 Priorities

Strategic Goal: Preserve our aging social housing stock by leveraging the DFC fund	
Priority	**Accomplishment**
Complete the investment of $4 million in five key areas: heating upgrades, making our properties more accessible, replacing structural components such as roofing and windows, upgrading sprinkler and fire alarm systems, and replacing flooring	• Housing Nova Scotia developed a plan to strategically invest $42 million from deferred federal contribution funds over a 10-year period. This investment includes repairs and upgrades to seniors and family housing, as well as housing cooperatives. • See additional detail in the 2014-15 Milestones Section of this report.
Identify areas of greatest needs and present government with more investment opportunities to preserve our stock of social housing	
Continue our work to revitalize our seniors buildings	
Strategic Goal: Reduce homelessness and assist the most vulnerable Nova Scotians	
Priority	**Accomplishment**
Identify opportunities to include supportive and accessible units designed directly into housing development	• All new affordable rental and rental preservation projects we invest in are built to visitability design standards. These include wider doorways, levered door handles and faucets, appropriately placed electrical outlets and light switches, and reinforced walls in the bathroom so that grab bars can easily be installed.
Promote affordable housing that meets universal design standards, and explore design options that maintain affordability	• With respect to universal design, see above comments on visitability standards. • With respect to design options that maintain affordability, in 2014-15, we partnered with the Nova Scotia Home Builders Association to develop a small unit demonstration project. See also additional information on passive housing in the 2014-15 Milestones Section of this report.

Overview of Housing Nova Scotia's 2014-15 Priorities	
Invest $1.5 million in the Senior Citizens Assistance Program	• In 2014-15, funds under the Senior Citizens Assistance Program, along with assistance provided under our Home Adaptations for Seniors Independence Program and funding from the Department of Health and Wellness, all of which are targeted at Nova Scotia seniors, enabled Housing Nova Scotia to help approximately 900 senior households remain in their homes.
Take part in the Halifax Housing and Homelessness Partnership to ensure appropriate responses to homelessness in areas of greatest need in HRM. Work with the shelter community, and build on the success of the Housing Support Worker program to develop a Housing First approach that will help break the cycle of homelessness.	• Housing Nova Scotia continues to work with its partners to transition individuals who use emergency shelters and those at risk of homelessness to long term housing options. • Housing Nova Scotia's Housing Support Worker Program was introduced in 2011 as a pilot project for emergency shelter providers in the Halifax area. Its purpose was to facilitate the transition of homeless individuals or individuals at risk of homeless to more permanent housing options. Based on the results of the pilot, Housing Nova Scotia now invests approximately $450,000 annually in the Housing Support Worker Program. In 2013-14, the funded support workers helped 382 individuals find more permanent housing. • Housing Nova Scotia is part of the Homelessness Working Group under the Halifax Housing and Homelessness Partnership and is participating in the launch of phase one of a Housing First Program in the Halifax Region in 2015-16. Housing Nova Scotia plans to support this initiative through its rent supplement program. The first participants under this program are expected to transition from shelters to more permanent housing options in the fall of 2015.

Overview of Housing Nova Scotia's 2014-15 Priorities	
Strategic Goal: Promote strategic partnerships	
Priority	**Accomplishment**
Sponsor targeted industry, community, and government initiatives, such as specialized workshops for homebuilders.	• In November 2014, Housing Nova Scotia along with CMHC and Habitat for Humanity hosted an affordable home ownership conference. Presenters included national experts, experienced practitioners, and recognized speakers who discussed the latest issues that have an impact on accessing home ownership and housing affordability, with a special focus on first-time home buyers. Attendees included Halifax Regional Municipality officials and municipal staff along with representatives from some non-profit organizations and private sector developers. • Housing Nova Scotia supported various events from the Nova Scotia Home Builders Association (NSHBA), such as the EnerHouse Conference held in January 2015 and the Real Home Show held in late February 2015. • Also in 2014-15, Housing Nova Scotia was awarded the Peter Kohler Peak Award for "Building Bridges" by the Nova Scotia Homebuilders Association. The award recognizes Housing Nova Scotia's work with private sector developers, local governments and community organizations.
Develop tools such as density bonusing with a goal to increase density and overall housing affordability.	• Housing Nova Scotia continues to explore land use planning tools and options that may be used to increase overall housing affordability.
Support a strong non-profit housing sector by taking steps to strengthen relationships and building capacity.	• Housing Nova Scotia continues to work with housing co-operatives and non-profit housing organizations to strengthen their sustainability and long-term viability as they move toward expiry of their operating agreements. • Housing Nova Scotia also continues to participate in local housing initiatives to help identify solutions to local issues.

Overview of Housing Nova Scotia's 2014-15 Priorities	
Support the development sector in promoting smaller, more-energy-efficient homes as a sustainable way to increase the supply of affordable homes.	• Housing Nova Scotia signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Efficiency Nova Scotia to increase our collaboration in helping low and modest income home owners reduce energy consumption and increase energy efficiency, thereby helping to make their homes more affordable. • Housing Nova Scotia continues to research innovative approaches in developing housing such as activity-based design, strategies for building healthy places and age friendly communities, and SMART design for sustainable developments. • See additional information on passive housing and Housing Nova Scotia's partnership with the Nova Scotia Home Builders Association on its Cole Harbour development under the 2014-15 Milestones Section of this report.
Strategic Goal: Develop a new governance model	
Priorities	**Accomplishments**
Creating an advisory board	• Completed. See the Structure and Organizational Context section of this report.
Introducing legislative changes to provide authority to the position of Chief Executive Officer	• Regulatory amendments are under development in 2015-16
Review governance options and make recommendations to the Minister	• Consideration of governance options continues into 2015-16.

Measuring Our Performance

Below is an assessment of Housing Nova Scotia's progress towards the performance measures outlined in our 2014-2015 Business Plan.

Measure: Number of homes preserved through major health and safety-related repairs

What does this measure tell us?

This measure tracks the number of homes preserved through major health and safety-related repairs. It is reflective of Housing Nova Scotia's efforts toward the preservation of the existing supply of affordable homes in Nova Scotia, as well as toward helping low to moderate income households stay in their own homes.

Where are we now?

In our 2014-2015 Business Plan, a target of 2,700 was established for this measure. This was based on Housing Nova Scotia's past performance in assisting 2,575 households in 2012-13 and 2,478 households in 2013-14 through all of its home repair and adaptation programs funded through the CMHC/Nova Scotia Agreement for Investment in Affordable Housing 2014-2019 as well as other provincially funded programs.

Embedded within these figures is the number of homes preserved through major health and safety-related repairs. This is deemed to be an important indicator of the assistance Housing Nova Scotia provides to households so that their homes can be made safer and more livable. The grants and forgivable loans provided for these repairs are both provincially and federally funded under the CMHC/Nova Scotia Agreement for Investment in Affordable Housing 2014-2019.

In 2014-15, Housing Nova Scotia helped 1,072 households make major health and safety-related repairs to their homes. This result is consistent with past trends of 1,013 and 962 households assisted in 2012-13 and 2013-14, respectively.

In Housing Nova Scotia's 2015-2016 Business Plan, this measure has been replaced with the number of households assisted through major health and safety-related repairs and number of affordable units created.

Where do we want to be?

Nova Scotia has some of the oldest housing stock in Canada. Housing Nova Scotia continues to offer programs to improve the health and safety of homes within the province in recognition of the need to maintain and preserve the existing supply of affordable housing. In 2014, the Governments of Nova Scotia and Canada announced an extension to the Agreement for Investment in Affordable Housing, committing of $102 million over five years. The delivery of programs to improve the health and safety of homes is supported through the extension of this agreement.

Measure: Number of mixed-use, mixed-income developments initiated with greater than 20 units

What does this measure tell us?

Mixed-use, mixed-income developments help foster healthy, diverse and vibrant communities and support the creation of affordable housing. This measure provides an indication of Housing Nova Scotia's progress on its ongoing effort to foster mixed-use/mixed-income developments either as the lead in a development or in partnership with the private sector, non-profit sector or other stakeholders.

Where are we now?

This past year, Housing Nova Scotia obtained preliminary subdivision approval from the Town of Windsor for development of 28 acres of Housing Nova Scotia land, known as the College Park subdivision. This included the necessary approval that will enable us to develop a mix of housing types including single family, semi-detached, and multiple unit homes along with park and walking space.

In 2014-15, conceptual design work on the proposed Bloomfield development in north-end Halifax was completed with support from an extensive community engagement process and a Request for Expressions of Interest process related to the proposed community and cultural space.

Both of these developments will have greater than 20 units and work on them continues in 2015-16.

Where do we want to be?

As highlighted in the provincial housing strategy, Housing Nova Scotia will continue to support the development of mixed-use, mixed-income developments to foster healthy, vibrant, and diverse communities. This measure is not carried forward in the 2015-2016 Business Plan in recognition of the fact that work on developments of this nature generally span multiple years.

Measure: Number of neighbourhood improvement initiatives started

What does this measure tell us?

Housing Nova Scotia introduced a demonstration neighbourhood improvement initiative to support the revitalization of neighbourhoods in need of stabilization due to adjacent or internal pressures that may include development pressures, high crime rates, or a general need to upgrade the visual appearance. The intent is to target existing neighbourhoods where dwellings are in need of improvements and where the combined effect of in-fill development, improvements to the condition of the housing stock and/or removal of dilapidated dwellings will have a concentrated and dramatic impact on the neighbourhood. This measure provides an indication of Housing Nova Scotia's progress in pursuing opportunities identified in the provincial housing strategy, specifically the focused revitalization of communities.

Where are we now?

In 2014-15, Housing Nova Scotia began delivering the Neighbourhood Spruce-Up program in the Alice Street designated neighbourhood improvement area within the Town of Truro. At the request of residents, this program was re-offered in spring 2015. In 2013-14, Housing Nova Scotia invested $350,000 in a 14-unit residential in-fill project on a former school property in the area. The units are all one storey accessible two-bedroom townhouses and were fully rented upon completion in the spring of 2014. In 2014-15, Housing Nova Scotia invested $100,000 in creating 4 additional affordable rental units on the in-fill property.

Where do we want to be?

Housing Nova Scotia remains committed to fostering healthy and diverse communities through neighbourhood revitalization and has carried this priority forward in its 2015-2016 Business Plan. Our target is to designate 2 neighbourhoods each fiscal year.

Measure: Number of public housing capital investment initiatives

What does this measure tell us?

In 2014-15, Housing Nova Scotia began to strategically invest funds through the Deferred Federal Contribution (DFC) to meet current and future social housing needs. The Social Housing Agreement set out a provision to carry over funds (known as DFC) in order to allow the provinces to manage for unforeseen circumstances, such as: uninsurable losses; liabilities; capital replacement etc. Any funds carried over and interest accrued must be used to assist targeted households within the social housing portfolio.

This measure identifies investments and upgrades to public housing in areas such as heating, accessibility, building structure, and safety that are funded through the DFC. This investment is in addition to the annual budgeted amount for capital improvements to maintain the public housing stock and is separate from other DFC investments in housing co-operatives and rent supplements.

Where are we now?

The target of committing $4 million for repairs and upgrades for a total of 100 projects was exceeded. In 2014-15, Housing Nova Scotia committed approximately $5 million on 195 projects.

Where do we want to be?

Nova Scotia has an aging public housing stock that requires ongoing maintenance and capital improvements to ensure its viability for future generations. Our 2015-2016 Business Plan includes a priority to continue investing DFC funds to preserve Nova Scotia's public housing stock.

Measure: Number of new units created in mixed-use and mixed-income developments where we have investments (greater than 20 units)

What does this measure tell us?

This measure focuses on Housing Nova Scotia's work with partners to create more affordable mixed-use, mixed-income units in developments through the New Rental Program. This measure relates to the housing strategy's emphasis on working in partnership with other departments, the private sector, municipal governments, and others to foster vibrant communities.

Where are we now?

Housing Nova Scotia continues to work with partners to develop new affordable housing in mixed- use and mixed-income developments. This past year, 16 affordable rental units were created in the Amherst area alongside new homes to be sold at market prices. In addition, five affordable rental units were developed in a mixed commercial, residential building in the New Glasgow area. While fewer than 20 affordable units were created in each of these developments, individually, these two developments add diversity to the communities in which they are located.

Where do we want to be?

Housing Nova Scotia will continue to work with the private and non-profit sector to develop affordable housing units. By locating these units in built-up areas, residents can benefit from local networks, transit, and services. While this measure has not been carried forward in 2015-16, operationally, it remains a key indicator of progress in the creation of new affordable housing.

Measure: Number of individuals who complete home ownership classes

What does this measure tell us?

Housing Nova Scotia continues to work toward development of an equity pathway to home ownership appropriate for individuals with moderate incomes. This measure is an indicator of our progress in helping households prepare and get into home ownership.

Where are we now?

In 2014-15, Housing Nova Scotia undertook supporting research and analysis and initiated development of proposed affordable home ownership program options. This work is continuing in 2015-16. The proposed program options are being designed for application in Housing Nova Scotia developments, including Bloomfield and College Park in Windsor. Housing Nova Scotia intends to partner with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Habitat for Humanity to offer a home ownership education program to clients who qualify for the proposed home ownership program.

Where do we want to be?

The 2015-2016 Business Plan reaffirms Housing Nova Scotia's ongoing commitment to supporting individuals find pathways into home ownership. This measure has been refined in 2015-16 to link participation in home ownership classes to a requirement for eligibility for affordable home ownership assistance program options, currently under development by Housing Nova Scotia.

Measure: Number of seniors or persons with disabilities helped by health and safety-related repairs or home adaptations that will enable them to continue to live independently in their own homes and communities

What does this measure tell us?

Assisting low to moderate income seniors and persons with disabilities in continuing to live independently in their own homes is a key objective of Housing Nova Scotia's home repair and adaptation programs. This measure is the number of approved applications under our health and safety-related home repair and adaptation programs that have been designed for low to moderate income seniors and persons with disabilities.

The financial assistance provided for home repairs helps to ensure that these homes are healthy and safe and helps these households remain in their chosen communities. This in turn supports diversity and social inclusion for seniors and persons with disabilities in communities across the province.

In 2014-15, the Department of Health and Wellness contributed $1.3 million in funding to support home repair and adaptation programs targeted at helping seniors continue to live independently in their homes.

Where are we now?

This past year, Housing Nova Scotia helped 1,059 applicants under these programs. We exceeded our target of 1,000 approved applications and remained consistent with the 1,104 approved applications in 2013-14.

Where do we want to be?

Serving Nova Scotian seniors and persons with disabilities continues to be a key objective. Housing Nova Scotia will work to maintain or increase, where possible, the number of seniors and persons with disabilities helped in 2015-16. The budget for the Senior Citizens Assistance Program has increased by $1.5 million in 2015-16 and will therefore result in additional help for seniors.

Measure: Number of individuals being housed in a supportive environment

What does this measure tell us?

This measure is an overall average of the number of low income persons living in rent supplement units, funded through Housing Nova Scotia, that provide safe, affordable housing for individuals making the transition from emergency shelters to more long-term housing options. In conjunction with the housing options provided, work continues toward the objective of providing households with access to the ongoing support services they need.

This measure is the average number of persons at risk of homelessness and transitioning into long-term housing options who are living in these rent supplement units throughout the year; as one household moves into a unit with a rent supplement, another household may no longer require a rent supplement.

Where are we now?

This past year, an overall average of 81 households were being housed in a supportive environment, significantly higher than the target of 50 individuals. We also provided funding for eight Housing Support Worker positions, employed with various shelter organizations, to help persons who are homeless transition to more permanent housing.

Where do we want to be?

Housing Nova Scotia will continue to work closely with the non-profit community and is a member of the Halifax Housing and Homelessness Partnership, which is developing a Housing First approach targeting chronic and episodic users of homeless shelters. This measure has been slightly modified in the 2015-2016 Business Plan to report on the number of dwelling units provided in conjunction with access to ongoing support services rather than the number of individuals who were housed in these dwellings.

Measure: Number of service providers being supported

What does this measure tell us?

Through the Shelter Enhancement Program, Housing Nova Scotia provides financial assistance for needed capital improvements to emergency shelters and second stage housing targeted to victims of family violence. This funding is to help an organization address health and safety concerns, accessibility, safe programming and play areas for children, and security. The measure identifies the number of approved shelter/second stage housing Shelter Enhancement Program applications along with the number of dwelling units/beds affected by these improvements.

Where are we now?

In 2014-15, Housing Nova Scotia provided grants under the Shelter Enhancement Program to 13 non-profit applicants that included a total of 202 beds/self-contained units, exceeding the target of 10 organizations.

Where do we want to be?

Housing Nova Scotia will continue to offer the Shelter Enhancement Program and support the non-profit sector in providing housing options to victims of family violence.